

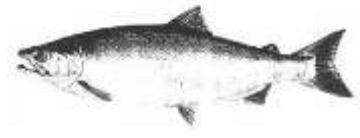
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #21

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, June 20 for a 24-hour commercial fishing period. **Waters within the Chinook salmon inside closure area will be OPEN during this fishing period.** The cumulative sonar count through June 18 was 725,871 fish whereas the anticipated inriver passage range for this date is 418,537 – 642,753 fish. The count from midnight through 6:00 am this morning was 1,929 fish, which projects to a daily count of 7,716 fish. The minimum inriver passage objective for today is 9,346 fish. For the week ending June 22, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 11,430 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 14,273 sockeye salmon. An aerial survey of the Copper River Delta is anticipated to be flown late next week. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 36-hour period that occurred on Monday, June 17 was 600 Chinook and 153,000 sockeye salmon with an estimated 809 deliveries reported. This compares to an anticipated harvest of 59,000 sockeye and 400 Chinook salmon for this period. The cumulative Copper River District commercial harvest to date is 7,800 Chinook salmon and 991,000 sockeye salmon.

The Copper River District is open to subsistence fishing concurrent with commercial fishing periods until closed at the end of the season. Subsistence permits may be obtained during regular business hours. The Cordova ADF&G office is open to the public Monday - Friday, 8:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm. **Subsistence permits are not available outside of regular office hours.**

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District will open for the commercial fishing season at 7:00 am on Thursday, June 20 for a 24-hour period. For the week ending June 22, the actual Bering River District survey count was 12,150 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 4,048 sockeye salmon. The next aerial survey of the Bering River District is anticipated to be flown next week.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open to drift gillnet fishing for a 84-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20 with an additional 60-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Monday, June 24. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Gillnets with a depth of greater than 60 meshes will not be permitted in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict prior to the first Monday in July, unless modified by emergency order. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, June 16 was 30,000 chum and 800 sockeye salmon with 149 deliveries reported. A total of 634,000 hatchery chum salmon are forecast to return to the Port Chalmers remote release site. The run timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding waters of the Esther Subdistrict will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20. The Esther Subdistrict, excluding the WNH THA and SHA, will open to commercial fishing for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20. Harvest from the period that closed Tuesday, June 18 was 81,000 chum and 2,400 sockeye salmon with 352 deliveries reported. PWSAC achieved the assigned WNH chum salmon revenue goal yesterday. PWSAC's age composition estimate from the cost recovery fish harvested on June 17 are: 1% age-6, 81% age-5, 17% age-4, and 1% age-3. A total of 2.54 million chum salmon are forecast to return to WNH. The run timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27. A total of 156,000 sockeye salmon are forecast to return to Coghill Lake, with 126,000 fish anticipated to be available for common property harvest. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 48-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20. **The MBH AGZ will be closed during this fishing period.** Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, June 16 was 30,000 chum and 27,000 sockeye salmon with 501 deliveries reported. A total of 1.13 million sockeye salmon are forecast to return to MBH. The harvest timing for these sockeye salmon is from June 1 – August 1.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20.

SEINE FISHERIES: The first aerial survey for portions of Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts was conducted on Monday, June 17. The next aerial survey for portions of Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts is scheduled for the week of June 24. Escapement observations were minimal during the first survey, which is to be expected for the date. VFDA made cost recovery test sets on Monday, June 17, with pink salmon catches of 30 or fewer fish per set. VFDA expects to begin its 2013 pink salmon cost recovery program on Thursday, June 20.

There will be a commercial fishing opener on Monday, June 24 in portions of the Eastern and Southeastern districts, with time and area to be announced on Saturday, June 22.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 20, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 24. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. These openings are intended to target a forecast return of 6,400 remote release sockeye salmon. These sockeye salmon have an average run timing of June 15 – August 1.

The AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will open to purse seine fishing at 8:00 am Thursday, June 20 for 84-hours, with an additional 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 24. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that ended on Sunday, June 16 is 1,700 sockeye, 61 pink, and 39,105 chum salmon with 67 deliveries reported. The cumulative Southwestern District commercial harvest to date is 13 Chinook, 1,990 sockeye, 1 coho, 100 pink, and 87,210 chum salmon. A total of 306,000 remote release chum salmon are forecast to return to the AFK Hatchery. The run timing for these chum salmon is from June 1 – July 27.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to occur by 2:00 pm Saturday, June 22.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time in season either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, in season harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.
- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fishery under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an "intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering." (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.